

Eszter Kiss, MA, LPC

kiss@marshall.edu

Ben Childers, MA, LPC

childers44@marshall.edu

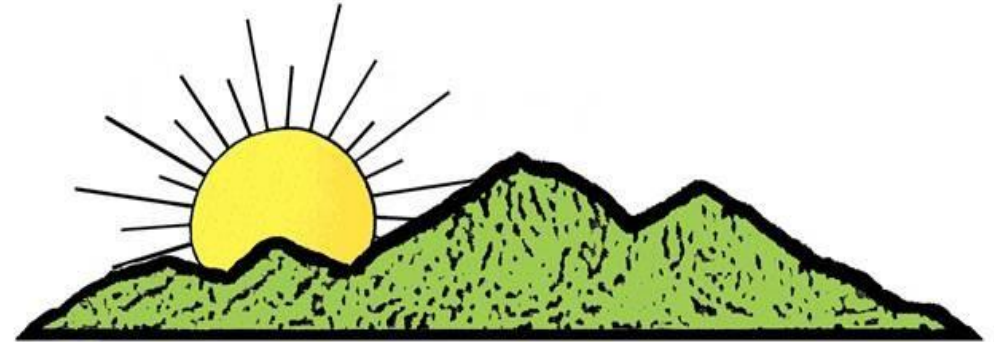
Marc Ellison, Ed.D., LPC, ALPS

ellison13@marshall.edu

West Virginia Autism Training Center

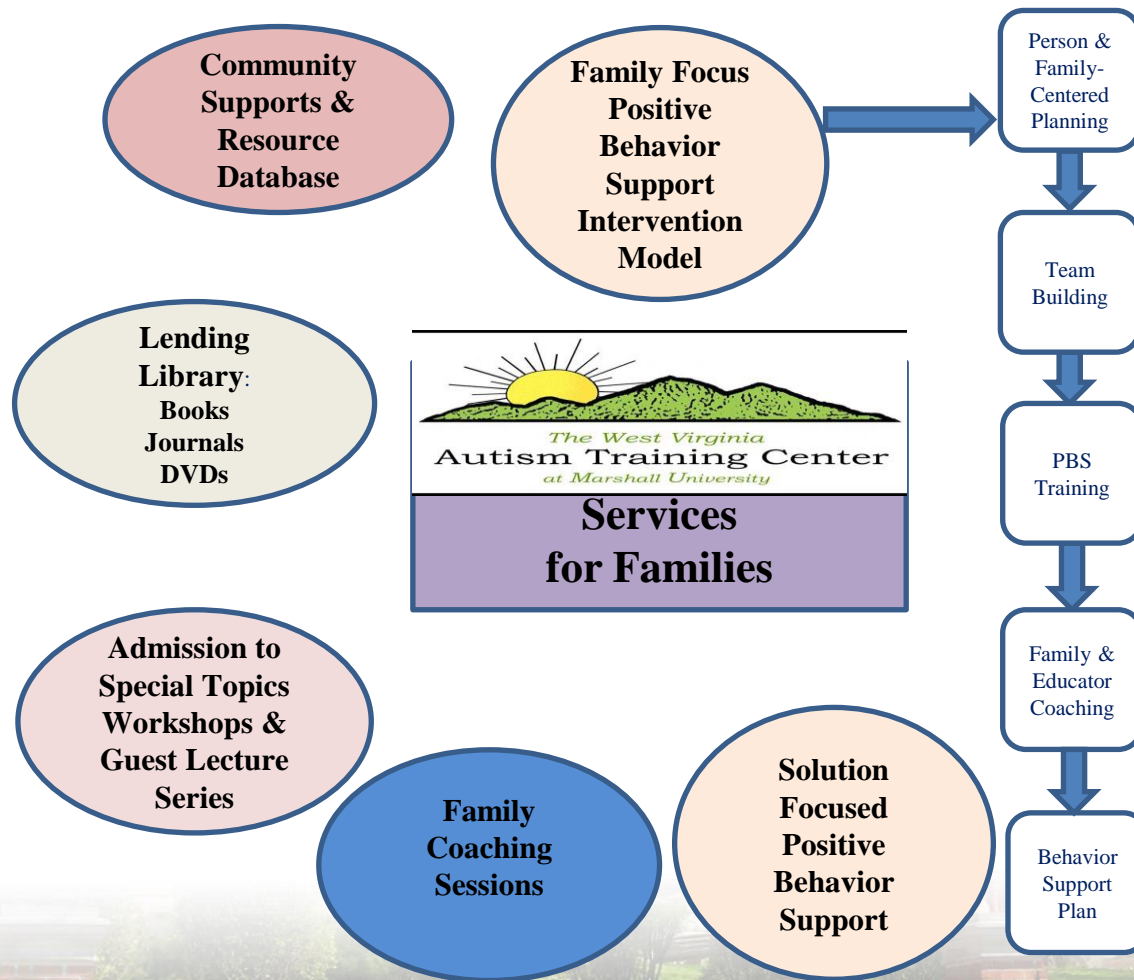
Marshall University

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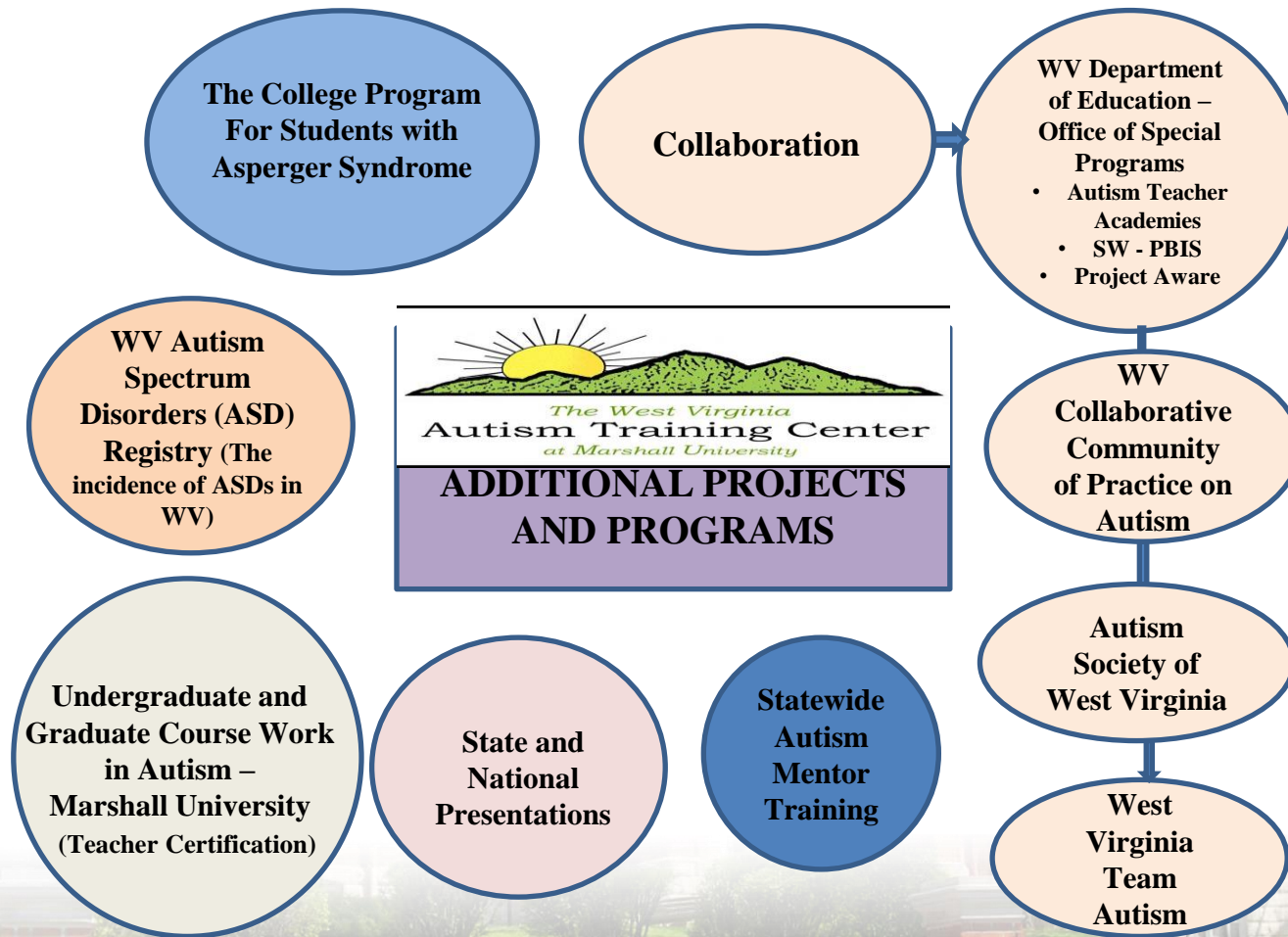
The West Virginia
Autism Training Center
at Marshall University

***Developing Therapeutic Relationships with Clients Diagnosed with
Autism Spectrum Disorders***



2012

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Learner Outcomes

- o Recognize challenges that exist with traditional talk therapy for clients diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.
- o Learn specific techniques that can help establish a therapeutic relationship, and counseling and skill-building strategies that can help improve quality of life for clients with autism spectrum disorders.
- o Understand that despite commonalities that exist within the spectrum, those with autism spectrum disorders experience life from individual perspectives. One approach does not fit all.



Photo by Betty Udesen, Seattle Times

To Effectively Support: Understand The Symptoms and Characteristics





General ASD Profile

General Diagnostic Criteria

- **Persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts** [manifested in a variety of ways, mostly involving deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, non-verbal behavior, and development and maintenance of relationships];
- **Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities** [manifested in a variety of ways, mostly involving stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects, or speech; insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines, or ritualized patterns; highly restricted, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity; and hyper- or hyporeactivity to sensory input];
- **Symptoms must be present in the early developmental period** (but may not become fully manifest until social demands exceed limited capacities, or may be masked by learned strategies in later life);
- **Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment** in social, occupational, or other important areas of current functioning

Related Characteristics

- Estimated 46% have average to above average intelligence
- 25% have seizure disorders
- Unusual sleeping patterns
- 25% of people with autism have digestive issues
- Allergies
- Excessive fear or a lack of fear (prediction; cause and effect)
- Sensory processing problems

Common Characteristics ASD and the Effect on Life Quality

Common Challenges That May Affect Mental Health & Life Quality

Each Challenge Can Create A Need For Support Because They May

- Executive Dysfunction
 - *Alienate those who might otherwise become part of a typical social network*
- Challenges with Social Communication
 - *Lead to significant day-to-day anxiety and distress*
 - *Cause misunderstandings in school and at work that affect reputation*
- Social Skill Deficits
 - *Lead individuals to use or abuse substances that help them relax and decrease distress*
- Challenges with Communication
 - *Cause legal and / or financial troubles*
- Challenges related to Theory of Mind
 - *Demonstrate vulnerability to bullies*
 - *Exacerbate relationship problems*
 - *Demonstrate vulnerability to bullies*

A photograph of a brick wall with a sign that reads "MARSHALL UNIVERSITY". The sign is white with black lettering and is mounted on a brick wall. The background shows a green lawn and some trees.

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Challenges that Influence Therapy: Executive Functioning



- Inhibiting actions
- Memory
- Attending selectively
- Setting goals, planning, and organizing
- Self-Regulation





Challenges That Influence Therapy: Theory Of Mind

- The ability to attribute mental states — beliefs, intents, desires, pretending, knowledge, etc. — to oneself and others and;
- To understand that others have beliefs, desires, and intentions that are different from one's own. And;
- The ability to understand and recognize that others are assessing and making judgments about us



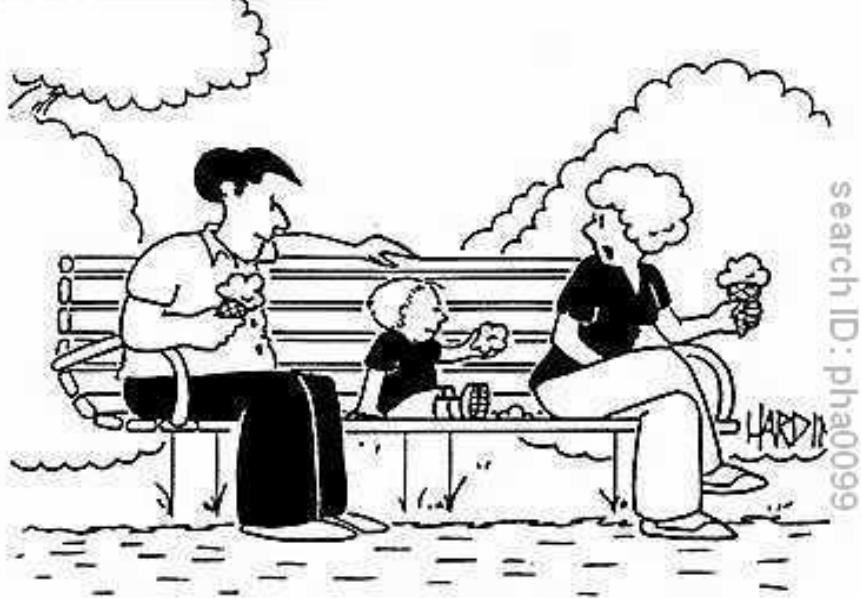
Common Day-To-Day Challenges: Social Communication

- Social reciprocity;
- Social interaction;
- Social skills;
- Communication or communication skills, and language or language skills



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Common Day-To-Day Challenges:

The Hidden Curriculum

"I assumed he'd know to eat the cone last."





Myth:

Autism is easy to recognize

The Evolution Of ASDs



- o Prevalence in 1985: **4-5:10,000**
- o Prevalence in 2007: **1:150**
- o Prevalence in 2009: **1: 110**
- o **Prevalence in 2014: 1:68**
 - Better diagnostic abilities, understanding of the condition, possible link to environmental factors
 - Higher prevalence reported in males; some suggest female children are able to hide challenges easier than male children in early development
 - Early intervention recognized as key to successful outcomes
- o Many of the characteristics of ASD can be "masked"
- o More and more teens with ASD are seeking a college experience, a concept that was very rare even 10 years ago



Myth:

Autism can be caused by poor parenting

What goes around comes around

- o From comments in Indianapolis Star, October 8, 2011:

“To me, autistic children are simply the result of bad parenting that left spanking children for misbehavior and instead adopted non-physical punishments, such as time out and other practices that creates spoiled brats who act out because they know there is no real consequence for their actions.”

- o Dennis Leary, *Why We Suck* (2008), asserts that autism is booming because parents “want an explanation for why their dumb-ass kids can’t compete academically so they run to psychologists. “I don’t give a [bleep] what these crackerjack whack jobs tell you, yer kid is NOT autistic. He’s just stupid.”



Myth:

People with autism test others, and manipulate with their behavior



Myth:

*People with autism live
in a “world of their own”*



Myth:

*People with autism have
an intellectual disability*

- 46% of those with ASD have average to above average intelligence
(CDC, 2014)



Myth:

*People with autism have
no real interest in social relationships*





STOP TALKING

You never make sense anyway.

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